

**LEGISLATIVE SERVICES AGENCY
OFFICE OF FISCAL AND MANAGEMENT ANALYSIS**

301 State House
(317) 232-9855

FISCAL IMPACT STATEMENT

LS 7232

BILL NUMBER: HB 1643

DATE PREPARED: Jan 17, 1999

BILL AMENDED:

SUBJECT: Elective Study of the Bible in Public High Schools.

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**FUNDS AFFECTED: X GENERAL
DEDICATED
FEDERAL**

IMPACT: State & Local

Summary of Legislation: This bill would require school corporations beginning in the 2001-2002 school year to offer a total of two credits of elective high school instruction in: 1) the history of the Bible; and 2) the influence of the Bible in history and literature. It would provide that the instruction may not be devotional or promote religious beliefs or practices, and a student may not be required or influenced to elect to participate in the instruction.

It would require the Department of Education to do the following regarding elective high school instruction in the Bible: 1) make available to school corporations a list of appropriate available instructional material; 2) develop curriculum guides to assist teachers; and 3) provide other types of assistance to school corporations.

Effective Date: July 1, 1999.

Explanation of State Expenditures: Currently, the Department of Education creates curriculum proficiency guides focused on standards to achieve student learning and to achieve curriculum development at the school corporation level. The process of curriculum proficiency guide development involves the following groups of individuals: 1) teachers; 2) parents; 3) students; 4) higher education faculty; and 5) business-community leaders. Curriculum proficiency guides are revised in conjunction with a six-year textbook adoption cycle.

In addition, the Department of Education provides regional workshops regarding curriculum, instruction, and assessment for the following individuals: 1) teachers; 2) curriculum developers; and 3) administrators. These workshops are designed to provide information regarding the goals and skills essential to successful student learning to school corporation personnel.

The Department of Education also currently provides assistance to school corporations regarding appropriate instructional material concerning a school corporation's curriculum by listing non-commercial resources on

the Department of Education's web site.

HIGH SCHOOL ELECTIVE COURSES IN THE BIBLE

Currently, Biblical Literature is offered as an approved high school course for one credit, and is offered under the curriculum area of English/Language Arts. However, no course currently exists that could satisfy the requirements of a course regarding history of the Bible.

This bill would require the Department of Education to do the following concerning elective high school instruction in the Bible: 1) make available to school corporations a list of appropriate available instructional material; 2) develop curriculum guides to assist teachers; and 3) provide assistance to school corporations regarding teacher professional development.

Since the Department of Education already provides curriculum assistance for courses contained within the curriculum area of English/Language Arts (including Biblical Literature), there would be no additional cost to the State regarding the Bible as literature portion of this bill.

Although the Department of Education provides curriculum assistance for history courses contained within the curriculum area of Social Studies, it would incur additional administrative time and cost in adding a history related course concerning the Bible (the additional time and cost would be attributable to providing curriculum assistance described in the three examples listed above).

It has been estimated that the additional first-year cost to the Department of Education could total approximately \$95,000 - \$115,000 in order to fulfill the requirements of this bill. Cost estimates include but are not limited to the following: 1) listing of non-commercial resources on the Department of Education's web site; 2) development and printing of curriculum resource guides; 3) in-service training; and 4) regional workshops.

The Department of Education reports that during the two following years, continued professional development could be necessary in order to provide adequate support to teachers involved in history related courses concerning the Bible (the additional cost would be based on the number of high school teachers who would be needed to teach students electing to take history related courses on the Bible).

The funds and resources required above could be supplied through a variety of sources, including the following: 1) existing staff and resources not currently being used to capacity; 2) existing staff and resources currently being used in another program; 3) authorized, but vacant, staff positions, including those positions that would need to be reclassified; 4) funds that, otherwise, would be reverted; or 5) new appropriations.

Currently, the Department of Education has five vacant positions in the Office of Program Development of which four are education consultants, and one is a clerical.

Ultimately, the source of funds and resources required to satisfy the requirements of this bill will depend upon legislative and administrative actions.

This bill makes no appropriation.

Explanation of State Revenues:

Explanation of Local Expenditures: This bill would require that school corporations offer a total of two credits of elective high school instruction regarding the Bible. It would require instruction in the following two specific areas: 1) the history of the Bible; and 2) the influence of the Bible in history and literature.

Currently, school corporations are allowed to offer Biblical Literature via the curriculum area of Language/Arts. However, no course of instruction currently exists in the curriculum area of social studies that could satisfy course requirements relating to the history of the Bible.

The effects of this bill would vary from school corporation to school corporation, and would depend upon the number and size of school corporation high schools, teacher staffing levels, and the number of students who would opt to take elective history courses pertaining to the Bible. School corporations with large high schools and a large number of interested students could experience greater additional time and cost in implementing the provisions of this bill than would school corporations having smaller high schools and smaller numbers of interested students.

Explanation of Local Revenues:

State Agencies Affected: Department of Education.

Local Agencies Affected: School Corporations.

Information Sources: Mary Fortney, Department of Education, (317) 232-9158; Phyllis Lewis, Department of Education (317) 232-9142; State of Indiana, 12/31/98 Staffing Report.